

# THE WASHINGTON UNION.

## FURTHER NEWS FROM NICARAGUA.

The intelligence from Nicaragua continues to be of the most contradictory character. The Aspinwall correspondent of the New York Times writes, under date of April 4, as follows:

We have had no Nicaragua news here from the Pacific side since the Orizaba arrived at Panama; and all the information I could obtain from the passengers when they arrived here, and all I have since learned from Panama, was, that Walker was in a very bad fix, the allies having surrounded him at all sides at Rivas. Nothing positive has been heard from him since the 25th of March, as the Costa Ricans had entire possession of the road between Rivas and San Juan del Sur.

The British mail steamer Clyde has just arrived from Greytown with dates to the 15th. I went on board personally, and spent an hour in order to gain correct information. I have just been told that the Costa Ricans, under the leadership of Walker and his forces on the river San Juan, had taken down the bridge at the Clyde, and were now doing nothing. It is rumored that the Costa Ricans are now doing nothing with several gun boats with which they can, or believe they can, force the river. Until then, Lockridge intends to remain quiet, and will not commence the offensive. Some of my informants stated, also, that just as the Clyde was leaving Greytown a report was current that Lockridge had taken Castillo, or that some battle had occurred in the neighborhood of Machuca or Castillo. Perhaps the Costa Ricans had attacked Lockridge's position; but all was uncertainty.

The news of the successes of the filibusters has reached this quarter by every steamer, but has as yet proven false. During my residence here of three months, I have heard of some eight victories, won by Lockridge on the San Juan, and neither I nor any of the citizens here give the least credence to anything the filibusters may say or write.

Several of the Costa Ricans, who came by the steamer, give dismal accounts of their past sufferings and privations. With their present force, they say no chance of opening communication with Walker. At the very least, one-half of his men are down with the fever. They have not been able to get any news from Walker down the river. The boys think he is completely used up, has escaped from Nicaragua, and will endeavor to get to San Juan river to take command of the small force there. General Hornsby is in a state of high delirium because Lockridge will not land over his command. In fact, all the superior officers are at loggerheads.

If the river cannot be used, Lockridge says an attempt will be made on Costa Rica, as he is certain 500 or 1,000 men will be dispatched from the States by the Texas and Tennessee for this purpose.

Several scouts who were sent out to reconnoitre Castillo, between the 20th and 25th, have not returned.

A correspondent of the Times at Greytown writes on the 2d instant:

Agreeably to promise, I endeavor to forward you the latest news. There is, however, little or no news of importance. Col. Lockridge has been down here several times with the same Scott for provisions, the last time was on the 31st ult. The sickness amongst his men is alarming; and from one or two of the men to whom I spoke, I learned that his whole force had refused to remain any longer at San Juan, or the island of Providence, at the mouth of the river San Carlos, on account of the malarial prostration there. In consequence, Lockridge has abandoned these places and moved out. His entire force is now higher up the river—to the Machuca rapids—five miles above the island of Providence.

Several deserters who have recently arrived here say that the movement to Machuca was not made altogether on account of the malarial prevailing amongst his troops, and to avoid the disease the Costa Ricans, by the Lockridge intended to remain at Machuca till the Texas should bring more reinforcements, and then move up the San Juan towards Costa Rica. [The Texas, as our readers are aware, has been withdrawn, and consequently no recruits can go out in her.—*Ed. Union.*] The prevailing opinion amongst the officers and men was, that in the event of the capture of Port Castillo, which could only be accomplished by an immense sacrifice of life, they could not proceed further, as the upper river and lake steamers were held by the Costa Ricans near San Carlos. They also say that he had sent out scouts to find the Costa Ricans, who were out from Rivas, and were at San Juan del Sur, with forty men, had undertaken to convey the eighty men arrived by the Sierra Nevada from California to Rivas, and had lost half of them in the attempt. I now learn, from undoubted authority, that, in substance, the statement was correct. Cayce, with the forty men he had under his charge, took a by-road, and arrived early at Rivas. This day the Costa Ricans had just started earlier in the morning, met the Costa Ricans about five miles on the road, and left forty of their number on the field of battle.

The friends of Walker still contend that he has from 1,500 to 2,000 men under his command at Rivas. A "gentleman" informed the Aspinwall Courier that on the 16th of March Walker had 1,100 good fighting men, besides several hundred more fit for defence in case he was attacked. Let us see: When I was at Rivas, the last of January, Walker's whole force, to my certain knowledge, consisted of not more than 800 men fit for duty, and 150 men in the two hospitals, who would never do any more fighting. He had, however, recruited, February 1, 1857, 50 men from San Francisco; March 1, he got 75, or say 80, by the Sierra Nevada; March 16, the Orizaba landed 21 men at San Juan del Sur—making in all 151 men, added to 800, gives a total of 951 men. Since then he lost, in the two first fights at Orizaba and San Carlos, two hundred and twenty men, and lost the place, at least 50 men. Numbers lost 50 in trying to relieve Cayce. The latter lost 40 in going back to Rivas. One hundred and twenty-six deserters have arrived by way of Costa Rica, at Panama, leaving 41 more to be lost by next steamer. In all, then, since February 1, 1857, he has lost at least 160 additional men, who have died, sickened, or been disbanded, and we have 491 men—100 more than he could possibly count up to-day.

No confidence is placed in the story of the assassination of President Rivas at Leon. It is true that one of his ministers, Castillo, a native of Granada, was fired at while standing in his own door, and that next day both he and another of his cabinet resigned. Probably the story of Rivas's assassination grew out of these circumstances.

I wrote you in my last, by the Texas, that I could see no good reason for doubts that a battle did really take place in the suburbs of Rivas between Walker and a portion of the Costa Rica force. In the face of the Costa Ricans, I have been unable to find a single report, or letter, giving any definite account of such a fight, but that all appears to be founded on hearsay. I am now inclined to set it down as a Boresback—similar to the story brought by the Costa Ricans, the Sierra Nevada.

AMERICAN VETERANS.—It is generally known that watches of American manufacture are now coming into extensive use.

They are characterized by several features of special peculiarity. The first of these is the absence of the fuse and chain. These parts, which were very necessary for equipping the force in the old verge watch, are confined by the English in the modern lever watch, but in the Swiss watches, which perform so excellently, no such parts exist. The second feature is such an arrangement of the parts as to lessen the liability of the watch to stop from the pressure of foreign substances, and at the same time to facilitate the discovery of any cause of derangement, almost the entire train being fully open to view. The third and distinguishing feature is the principle of making every watch and every part the duplicate of every other. This plan has been so far adhered to that every movement will fit every case, and many parts can be transferred from watch to watch without alteration.

ICE IN THE STRAITS.—The ex-postmaster from Mackinaw had arrived at Saginaw on the 30th, having started on the 21st. He reported the ice sold in the Straits, but no snow on it. He thought the ice would be out of the Straits by the 10th of April. There was no ice from Presque Isle to Bois Blanc. He came from Saginaw in a boat; saw a few fields of ice, but did not pass through any.

## DEPARTMENT NEWS.

### STATE DEPARTMENT.

Russia in Asia.—The following interesting extract is taken from the letter of an intelligent correspondent who is travelling in Russia:

I reached Irkutsk on the 7th of January last, after a passage of thirty-five days from Moscow. I landed at the most important and interesting cities on the way, in order to obtain what information I could in respect to the commerce of the country.

At Nijne Novgorod, the seat of the great fair, I stopped to look at its situation. The sale of tea at the late fair amounted to six millions nine hundred and twenty thousand rubles (silver). The whole value of trade at the fair was over three hundred millions of rubles. Should the American river be opened to commerce, it would not injure the trade of this city, for there would be commerce known for all when the country is opened and known. European Russia must continue to draw her tea overland. The opening of a direct commerce between Siberia and the United States by the Pacific Ocean, would stimulate all branches of industry, and finally make vast country known to the world. It possesses immense mineral wealth, but wants population and enterprise. Nijne is well built on the west bank of the Volga, where the Okah flows into the river. There are some forty steamers on the Volga, and commerce is rapidly increasing. The distance to Astrakhan and the Caspian sea is some twelve hundred versts. The river is frozen, but not yet sufficiently to risk a ride on it to Kazan, some five hundred versts to the east. I halted at Kazan, some old Tartar capital. It is a fine city, and commands much commerce. At Kazan, I reached the mouth of the Volga, which is the center and capital of mining operations in the Ural mountains. The trade concentrating here seems to be large. It is a beautiful and well-built city, and takes on by surprise, perched as it is on the pinnacle, and in the very heart of the mountains, half European, half Asiatic. The products of its soil are of great value, and the variety of minerals, precious stones, and marbles is truly wonderful. The government has a mint for copper, and other works for iron, marble, and precious stones. Tumen was the next point of interest; here is gathered the eastern Siberian trade, and import-export—no descending from the other, resting to take strength to cross the Ural from Astrakhan. Tolstok formerly engaged this commerce, but Tumen, being more direct, has superseded it. Thence by Irkutsk, which is a well-built city, I reached Tumen, where I rested to observe the opening of the annual fair. This is quite an unusual sight, and seems to command an extensive trade; between this and Irkutsk, I contracted to meet trains of sleds loaded with tea from Khabarovsk. Tumen is one of the great halting places for these trains, and where the tea is discharged and taken up by other trains; the trains that bring the tea returning with other merchandise. I saw in the open streets piles of tea being reloaded on its way to Nijne Novgorod. The amount and variety of merchandise displayed here was quite astonishing; and with frost at 30 deg. of Fahrenheit, business was brisk as possible. From this on to Chersky, the number of tea and other trains increase, and to say that I saw one thousand sleds in a day's travel would be within the mark. At Chersky, I rested to learn something of the mining operations in this region. This place is the port of call for a very extensive gold-mining region on the Yenisei. The "phases" immediately in the vicinity are somewhat exhausted, but to the north for seven hundred versts, and in other directions, there are extensive and rich mines. New discoveries are also being made; between this and Irkutsk, I contracted to meet the natives of the country are employed in the summer. While speaking of gold, I will state some facts learned here, (Irkutsk). I saw one miner who employs twelve hundred men in "placer diggings," one thousand versts to the northeast of this place on a stream that falls into the Lena. His diggings are composed of gravel and fifty pools of gold, which, at thirty-five of our pounds to the pool, gives five thousand four hundred and six pounds, estimating the value of a pound of gold (roughly) at two hundred dollars, will give one million eight hundred thousand dollars, or nine hundred millions to the land; and, owing to the severity of the climate, but five men in the year can be employed in the diggings. Another establishment of two thousand hands yielded eight hundred and twenty-eight dollars to the hand. This certainly will compare favorably with the mines of California. I have seen samples and specimens of the gold and sand, which closely resemble those found in California. In fact, from the Lena, I gathered the impression that the country are wonderfully rich in gold, and as all that is dug has to pass into the government mint, the amount obtained remains unknown to the public.

I find this a very pleasant city and the center of all that is interesting in eastern Siberia. It is the seat of learning, commerce, and government, and has power for this region, and worthy of a critical analysis. The appearance in this remote region of any foreigner would create at least curiosity, and some inquiry as to the motives and object of his visit; but the first American who had visited this city, (with the exception of Captain Haden, who brought out the steamship America for Russian service at the Amoor, who arrived here overland from Ayan a few days previous to my visit,) it excited unusual curiosity. There is much wealth here, and a great company is talked of to put steam on the Amoor as well as on the Lake Baikal. There is one steamer on the lake, the only one in Siberia, of American origin, the "Albatross," built at the wharves of the city. At present the only way of procuring machinery is overland from Eastern Europe, some three thousand five hundred versts distant. Coal and iron abound here, and, as yet, little has been done to develop them. Iron is made, but no machinery. Within a few days I shall go to Irkutsk, and thence to the southeast direction, about five hundred and fifty versts. The Baikal Lake is now frozen, and the whole distance will be performed in a sleigh with post horses.

I take the liberty of mentioning, as it may not be interesting the system of "posting" in Russia, having a good opportunity to observe it. It is a system of good degrees to the mail, to procure horses from the post offices, a distance of over five thousand versts, and some twelve degrees more of longitude than from Boston to Astoria.

This system of "posting" was originally established by the government for its own sole purposes—first strictly military; then followed the mail for the public; and, finally, for the use of travelers. There is from this place to Moscow two hundred and thirty stations, at which "troikas," or eighteen horses, are contracted for by the government to carry the mail twice a week, at three hundred rubles each "troika" per year. The stations were originally built by the government, and a postmaster appointed to reside at each. This arrangement compels the postmaster to furnish the mail with the necessary horses and vehicles; the horses at all other times (with the exception of one troika, which must remain always for the despatch of government couriers) are at the command of travelers, who carry what is called a "parashovsk," that is, an order by the government on the "postmaster" to furnish a certain number of horses for this "parashovsk," the government receiving, when delivered, you, one-half of a copete a verst per horse for the distance you are to travel by "post." This order, besides being an absolute command on the "postmaster" to furnish the horses which are required, authorizes them, in case the post horses are employed in the transportation of the mail, to procure horses (consequently) other horses from the peasants of the villages. The system in Russia is very complete, and seems to work well, and is worthy of consideration by our government in case a "post-road" be established from our western frontier to California. The distance from Moscow to this city is "5,138 versts;" from this city to Irkutsk, 1,200 versts; from Irkutsk to Tumen, 1,200 versts; from Tumen to the Caspian, 1,200 versts; from the Caspian to the Persian Gulf, 1,200 versts; from the Persian Gulf to Bombay, 1,200 versts; from Bombay to London, 1,200 versts; from London to New York, 1,200 versts; from New York to San Francisco, 1,200 versts; from San Francisco to Sacramento, 1,200 versts; from Sacramento to San Jose, 1,200 versts; from San Jose to San Francisco, 1,200 versts; from San Francisco to New York, 1,200 versts; from New York to London, 1,200 versts; from London to Paris, 1,200 versts; from Paris to Rome, 1,200 versts; from Rome to Athens, 1,200 versts; from Athens to Constantinople, 1,200 versts; from Constantinople to Cairo, 1,200 versts; from Cairo to Suez, 1,200 versts; from Suez to Aden, 1,200 versts; from Aden to Bombay, 1,200 versts; from Bombay to Calcutta, 1,200 versts; from Calcutta to Rangoon, 1,200 versts; from Rangoon to Singapore, 1,200 versts; 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